

REMARKS

Receipt of the Office Action of December 16, 2005 is gratefully acknowledged.

Claims 5 - 8 have been examined. These claims have been rejected as follows: claim 5 as unpatentable under 35 USC 103(a) over applicant's APA in view of Lynnworth; and claims 6 - 8 as unpatentable under 35 USC 103(a) over applicant's APA in view of Lynnworth and further in view of Schwald.

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

In applying Lynnworth against claim 5, the examiner states that "In figure 4a of Lynnworth, Lynnworth teaches that a metal ring gripping [sic] around a matching layer." Lynnworth, and in particular the disclosure in col. 12 relating to "Fig. 4" has been carefully studied. However, applicant cannot detect in this disclosure the "matching layer" or the "metal ring" that function as does the metal ring of the present invention. It is respectfully submitted, therefore, that the examiner's understanding of Lynnworth is misplaced.

Regarding claims 6 - 8, the examiner's reliance on Schwald (which is the U.S. equivalent of cited German patent DE 43 11 963 C2) is also misplaced because it too does not disclose the metal ring and its function.

Both rejections fail, therefore, since a teaching of a "metal ring gripping around said matching layer and having an interlocking fit therewith" is lacking.

New claims 9 and 10 have been added which further define a feature of the metal ring described on page 4 in lines 18 - 23 of the specification of this application. This feature is also not taught by the references of record.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and re-examination are respectfully requested and claims 5 - 10 found allowable.

Respectfully submitted,
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